

COPY

SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

COPY

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, MOSCOW

611

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

March 7, 1952

REF : NIE-43, Subject: The Strategic Importance of the Far East  
to the USSR, published 13 November 1951

SUBJECT: Embassy Comments on NIE-43, The Strategic Importance of the  
Far East to the USSR

While briefly mentioned in the discussion section of reference report (para 31), the analysis of the strategic importance of the Far East to the USSR, as presented in the conclusions, would not seem to take due cognizance of its strategic importance as a relatively solidified second or rear front in USSR global strategic planning. In a recent Chinese Communist publication Mao Tse Tung is quoted as regarding the FE as one arm in the strategic East-West Communist vise which would defeat the dragon of the so-called American-led imperialist camp. Similar thoughts are found in Lenin's analysis of the strategic significance of the Far Eastern or Colonial Areas. Certainly the value of a firmly Communist Far East to free Soviet armed forces for movement in the Near East or European areas cannot be underrated.

Another factor of significance deriving from this situation is that of policy fluidity. With a firm Far East the Soviets can alternately probe the "soft under side" either East or West, thereby causing weakening dispersion of the forces of the free world. The value to the USSR of having loyal satellite armies fighting for her, as in Korea, is likewise considerable.

The Embassy finds it difficult to accept the statement "In its assessment of the strategic importance of the Far East the USSR is probably more influenced by short-term than by long-term considerations." Of all the governmental systems in the world today there is probably none which keeps in mind simultaneously the long and short term objectives so well as the USSR. It is a basic tenet of Bolshevik theory that the "maximum" (ultimate and relatively unchanging) program and the "minimum" (more immediately obtainable, constantly changing) program must always be kept in mind with the latter directed toward the attainment of the former. Therefore, although Soviet efforts through propaganda and otherwise connected with the immediate objectives are likely to be more manifest, their ever-present interest in the "maximum" should not be discounted.

State Department review completed

SECRET

**SECRET**  
**SECURITY INFORMATION**

- 2 -

As regards the statement that the military expansion of Communist control into mainland Southeast Asia would be of limited immediate value, this would be so only if we consider that the Soviet purpose could be achieved only if the economy of these areas is so developed as to supplement that of the Soviet Union. This, however, is not the case. Chaos in the Southeast Asia area would have immediate and practical benefit for the USSR since it would deprive us first of all, of products of great importance to our own economic development and military preparedness; and secondly, would deprive us of the opportunity of demonstrating to the peoples of this area the possibilities for their development which would derive from close association with non-Sovietized, economically advanced countries. To attain our objectives in Southeast Asia we must improve the economic situation, alleviate social inequalities and promote political stability. Of positive value to the Soviets, however, would be economic distress, social discontent and political unrest--all of which are much more easily attained than the objectives of the program that we must follow.

Within the context of the above considerations it would seem that the USSR is probably more influenced by long-term rather than short-term considerations at the present time in view of the long-range value of the Far East as a secured second front. Therefore, while no opportunity would be lost to exploit areas of weakness (French Indo China, Burma, Malaya) such moves probably will not be undertaken where it is felt that their result would cause a disastrous curtailment of Soviet power in the Far East area in general.

Another point reinforcing the above conclusion is indicated in paragraphs 9 and 10 of reference report conclusions. Since the power complex there described will take considerable time to develop (although the Embassy does not necessarily agree that such a long period would be needed if Japan should enter the complex), it would seem definitely in the Soviet interest to view its long range development as of greater significance. Such would also seem consistent with Soviet policy development which has not usually considered time as of the essence in every situation.

signed - Elin O'Shaughnessy

Elin O'Shaughnessy  
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

**SECRET**